

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CA-01 VO-05 HA-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 PPT-01 ACDA-12
/108 W

-----018240 081635Z /23

P R 081107Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1737
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MOPS PDEV PINS BC RH
SUBJ: AFTERMATH OF KASANE INCIDENT

REF: GABORONE 0609

1. BOTH GOB AND RHODESIAN OFFICIALS HAVE FOLLOWED UP RECENT
AMBUSH AT KASANE WITH VERBAL BROADSIDES IN MEDIA. ACCEPTING
CREDENTIALS OF NEW DANISH AMBASSADOR OLSEN MARCH 3, PRESIDENT
KHAMA SAID WITH REFERENCE TO THODESIAN ATTACK THAT "DESPERATE
MEN HAVE NO SENSE OF VALUES, NO SENSE OF MORALITY, AND NO
REGARD FOR THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE". HE WARNED THAT NOT EVEN
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THE INNOCENT WILL BE SPARED CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA AND REITERATED GOB INTENTION TO TURN TO ITS "FRIENDS"
FOR ASSISTANCE IN RESIDTING RHODESIAN "TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION".

2. MEANWHILE, MARCH 4 BULAWAYO CHRONICLE REPORTS THAT RHODESIAN
FOREIGN MINISTER P.K. VAN DER BYL SENT WEEKEND MESSAGE TO UN
SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT REBUTTING WHAT HE CALLED "DIS-

TORTIONS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS" BY BOTSWANA CONCERNING KASANE INCIDENT. STATEMENT ALLEGES THAT ON FEB 27 RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES WERE AMBUSHED INSIDE RHODESIA BY GUERRILLAS WHO FLED TO BOTSWANA. RSF UNITS WERE SAID TO HAVE TRACKED GUERRILLAS TO "CAMP" INSIDE BOTSWANA WHERE "TERRORISTS" WERE "CLEARLY VISIBLE". STATEMENT THEN ALLEGES THAT GUERRILLAS WERE "JOINED BY PERSONS TRAVELING IN THREE VEHICLES WHICH WERE AMBUSHED BY RSF UNIT." VAN DER BYL'S STATEMENT CLAIMS THAT RSF HAS "BALLISTIC EVIDENCE" SHOWING THAT SAME WEAPONS WERE USED AGAINST RSF ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER. STATEMENT CONCLUDES THAT BOTSWANA MUST BEAR CONSEQUENCES IF BDF MEMBERS "ASSIST TERRORISTS IN THEIR MURDEROUS ACTIVITIES".

3. IN ADDITION TO VERBAL INFIGHTING, WEEKEND RHODESIAN PRESS (CHRONICLE, MARCH 4) REPORTS THAT MORE THAN 100 LARGE TRUCKS CARRYING NORTHBOUND GOODS ARE HELD UP AT CLOSED KAZUNGULA BORDER POINT. MARCH 3 CHRONICLE REPORTS INTERVIEW WITH GOB SECRETARY TO CABINET STEENKAMP WHO REPORTEDLY INSISTED THAT KAZUNGULA BORDER POST WILL NOT BE REOPENED. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, STEENKAMP SAID "WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO RISK THE LIVES OF OUR OFFICERS FOR TRAFFIC THAT IS BETWEEN RHODESIA AND THE EASTERN CAPRIVI." HE THEN REFERRED TO U.S.-BUILT BOTZAM ROAD (WHICH LINKS NORTHERN BOTSWANA WITH ZAMBIA VIA FERRY ACROSS ZAMBEZI RIVER) AS BEING SUFFICIENT TO CARRY BOTSWANA'S COMMERCE.

4. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE ECONOMIC CON-
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SEQUENCES WHICH MIGHT RESULT FROM PERMANENT CLOSURE OF KAZUNGULA BORDER POINT. LOCALITIES MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED WILL PROBABLY BE EASTERN SECTION OF CAPRIVI STRIP WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUPPLIED FROM RHODESIA VIA KAZUNGULA AND FAR NORTHERN AREA OF BOTSWANA WHERE RESIDENTS HAVE OBTAINED MANY OF THEIR SUPPLIES FROM PERIODIC TRIPS TO RHODESIA. SHIPMENTS OF GOODS TO ZAMBIA VIA KAZUNGULA AND WESTERN CORDON OF RHODESIA COULD ALSO BE DISRUPTED, ALTHOUGH THIS TRAFFIC COULD PRESUMABLY BE RE-ROUTED OVER FERRY TO ZAMBIA.

5. WE DO NOT KNOW EXTENT TO WHICH CLOSURE OF KAZUNGULA BORDER POST WILL COMPLICATE SUPPLY OF SADF TROOPS IN EASTERN CAPRIVI STRIP. HOWEVER, GIVEN LONG DISTANCES INVOLVED IN RESUPPLY OPERATIONS FROM OTHER AREAS OF NAMIBIA, THIS COULD IMPOSE SIGNIFICANT LOGISTICAL BURDEN ON SADF UNITS IN AREA.
NORLAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, ALLEGATIONS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, BORDER CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GABORO00651
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780104-0738
Format: TEL
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780394/aaaadbmu.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 00cf97cb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 GABORONE 609
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3407969
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFTERMATH OF KASANE INCIDENT
TAGS: MOPS, PDEV, PINS, PBOR, BC, RH, (KHAMA, SERETSE M), (VAN DER BYL, PK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/00cf97cb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014